

## [Sarah Jones]

26038

FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT

Miami, Florida

Mabel B. Francis

Editor

1,650 Words

7 Pages

Mrs. J.J. Fales

Princeton, Fla.

Dec. 13, 1938

Gladys Buck

SARAH JONES

"If any-body's ever knowed the Lord and then went out in sin again they's sure to come back to Him sometime," declared Sarah, "that's what Pa always preached and I believe he was right."

"But Mama I don't believe every thing they call sin is sin," argued Virginia. "You take the pitcher shows now, I don't believe there's no sin in them, and didn't the Lord make wine,

## Library of Congress

so why do the church folks think it's a sin to drink it? I know the Bible says when you drink strong drinks to stay inside your own gates but it don't say not to drink it."

I asked Sarah if she thought any one could be happy without religion. "No, I don't," she answered as she sat down on the hall floor and pulled her dirty dress around her knees.

Sarah was dirty and so was the house. She closed the bedroom doors as I entered. This is the first time I have found them dirty. "I don't see how anybody can go to bed and sleep if they ain't right. I know I couldn't sleep if I weren't right with the Lord."

"About sin," she continued, "The Bible says that he who 2 comitteth sin is of the Devil." "Then we are all servants of the Devil," interrupted Virginia, "even you, Mama, and I know that you are going to Heaven if anybody is."

"Well, I try to do the right thing and I hope so," Sarah answered, well pleased with this compliment.

Virginia continued, "I know one thing. I ain't no hypocrite and I don't pretend to be somethin' I ain't. Them's the kind of people I ain't got no use for. Tryin' to tell you what to do when they don't do the right thing themselves."

"Well, Virginia, you would be better satisfied if you went to church more," counseled Sarah. "I intend to have some fun before I die and I ain't goin' to make out like I's a Christian cause I like to go to dances and parties, and I am goin' to the show when ever I get ready to," answered Virginia. Her mind jumped from one subject to another and she continued, "Why, the people in a certain church here in Princeton don't even use wine for the sacrament."

"If they start using it," spoke Colombus from an adjoining room, "tell them to use black berry cause it's the best."

## Library of Congress

"What church do you belong to?" I asked Sarah. "The Baptist, and I believe they's the only church that reads the Bible right. I always did believe that the Bible means just what it says and 3 they don't try to change it around to suit themselves."

"When the day of reckoning comes, I don't want to have to answer fer changing the word of God. I try to do unto others like I want to have 'em do to me and I believe that Jesus died to save me from sin. Faith without works ain't worth nothin' and works without faith ain't no better so I try to have both."

"My younguns don't take to church goin' much but I reckon if we had a good Baptist church here where we could go it would be different. We have to go to the Methodist and Nazerene and they don't like it so I don't make them go," Sarah concluded.

We then talked about education and Sarah said, "My kids ain't had much chance to go to school, but it don't seem to make much difference nohow cause there's plenty of folks that's had good schoolin' whats as poor as we are. Can't nobody seem to get any work to do and times are hard with every one. I want John to go on to school, though, as long as he can. It does seem that folks who have been to school git along in some ways better than others what ain't had a chance to go. They know how to talk and figgure better."

We discussed the kind of food we like and Sarah said[,?]

"We eat lots of beans, rice, grits, syrup and biscuits. Beans don't agree with me and the boys buy me vegetables when they can, but the beans are good for them and are as cheap as any thing we 4 can git. Now, that John is helpin' in the packing house, he brings home tomatoes and we have them stewed. When I can git squash I always eat a lot of them. The doctor told me that there weren't nothing as good for high blood pressure as squash. I stew them and then pour milk over them."

## Library of Congress

"I asked her what she seasoned them with, and she answered, "Nothin, not even salt, but the boys add a little salt to theirs. Salt is bad for me."

Sarah is a Democrat and votes a straight ticket. "I am a Southerner and couldn't do nothing else and feel right about it. All of my folks have been Democrats and I have always voted till last year. Somehow or nother I jest didn't git around to it last year."

At night, Sarah and her family, the neighbors and children, all gather around a huge bonfire in either Sarah's front yard or the neighbor's. The older members sit and talk while the children romp and play. The fire burns high every night when the weather is cold, and laughter is heard as one drives by.

Sarah says that she has no time for visiting and such. "When I git through with my own work, the week is almost done and I have to rest some time. Two days I go to help Minnie Dell, my daughter who married the merchant. I help her with her house work and ironing and then it takes me two days to git my own washing and ironing 5 done. I piddle around the house the rest of the time and I don't git much time to visit. Virginia ain't helped me much with the house since she started to quilting. I been right surprised at her. I didn't think she'd stick to it like she does. Why, she's almost got one quilt pieced."

Bill, Minnie Dell's husband, is then discussed. "I don't know what makes him so hateful," says Sarah. "He hires other boys to work in the stores all summer long and then in the winter when he needs extra help he wants my boys to help him. They've worked for him every winter so fer but they say they ain't goin' to do it any more. I don't know what he will do, but I ain't going to make them work fer him if they don't want to. They're good boys and I ain't going to have any body treat them so mean. They have to have a little pride to git along."

"Colombus tried to get W.P.A. work to do but Bill went and told them that he offered to give him a job and that he wouldn't take it so of course Colombus couldn't git on." Sarah talks

## Library of Congress

about Bill more than anyone else. "He has all them stores but he lowances Minnie Dell. She has to make fifteen dollars a week buy their groceries and pay the milk and paper bill as well as buy their clothes. The only thing that Bill loves is his money and the baby, Little Minnie Dell. She can make him do any thing she wants to."

I mentioned the coming holidays and asked Sarah if she was 6 looking forward to a good time. She shook her head and replied, "I don't guess we will have much of a Christmas this year. If I can make a cake that'll be about all the extra we'll have. It don't seem like the boys can both ever git work at the same time. If they could, we could have a little extra but it looks like when one of them gits a job the other one always loses his and that's the way it goes."

"When the children's daddy was able to work, we never had to want for so much but he's been in the hospital for over a year now and it don't look like he will ever be able to work again. He's just as well and fat as a hog but he can't move his legs. No, he ain't paralyzed. I don't know what's the matter with him, he's well and eats anything he wants but he just can't walk. I would have him at home if I could get a wheel chair and had a house with a bathroom in it."

Virginia was away from home. She had gone to help Minnie Dell with a party that she was giving for little Minnie Dell.

"Virginia don't want to git married until Sam is out of debt," Sarah confided to me. "Bill tells her that Sam ain't never going to marry her or he would a done it before now. He thinks that Virginia and Sam have been going together too long."

"Virginia's first husband was in debt when they got married 7 and he never got out the whole time they lived together. Sam has jist finished payin' for his car and he owes a few other little bills that he's going to pay before Virginia'll marry him. She says that she wants to use what money he makes for things she wants and that when he is married he won't

## Library of Congress

have to pay his mother board and then they will have enough to git along fine. In a way, I think she is right, don't you?"

The boys came in at that time and Sarah had to go warm the food for their supper so I left and Sarah went into her dark kitchen. I have been unable to report on the back room off the kitchen for when one of the family entered or left this room they always slid out and closed the door quickly behind them.